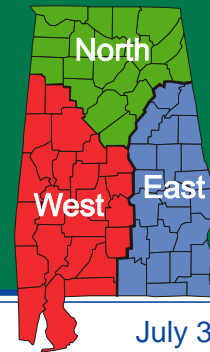


NRCS Alabama Current Developments



July 30, 2002

From The State Conservationist - *Robert N. Jones*

In my opinion, July is one of the fun months of the year—there is corn on the cob, vine ripe tomatoes, fresh peaches, and watermelon. Throw in a little fried chicken or catfish, and that alone is something to celebrate! And then, there is the 4th of July with all sorts of ways to commemorate the birth of our nation.

In the past, we may have taken that liberty for granted, but after the events of this past year, we realize what a privilege it is to live in America. There was another time in history when Americans united and expressed their appreciation for living in America. During July 1942, seven months after the United States entered World War II, magazines nationwide featured the American flag on their covers. Adopting the slogan “United We Stand,” hundreds of publications waved the Stars and Stripes to promote national unity, rally support for the war, and celebrate Independence Day.

On the sixtieth anniversary of the event, one hundred of these covers are displayed at the National Museum of American History in Washington. These covers are on view together for the first time since 1942.

Included with this article is a copy of the cover for *Successful Farming*. You might want to take a look at this exhibit on the internet at:

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/1942>.



As July draws to a close, enjoy all the “fruits of the earth” and celebrate the privilege of living in America.

Bob

PARTNERSHIP

BMPs Finalized

The Alabama Aquaculture Best Management Practices (BMPs) have been finalized. The BMPs are a joint effort of Auburn University Fisheries Department, NRCS, and the Catfish Industry in Alabama. When properly implemented, the BMPs should ensure that the water quality downstream from catfish operations in Alabama is not effected by the industry. BMPs can be found on the web at <http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/SOsections/Engineering/BMPindex.html>.

Ft. Rucker and NRCS Partnership

Staff from the NRCS in Alabama and Ft. Rucker's Lands Division are working to develop a Memorandum of Agreement for NRCS to provide reimbursable assistance for conservation work at the Fort. The assistance will be through the year 2007.

Poarch Creek Indian Tribe and NRCS Sign Agreement

In May, Alabama NRCS signed an agreement with the Poarch Creek Indian Tribe, the only federally recognized tribe in the state, to coordinate the protection of important cultural resources. The agreement serves as a vehicle to implement policies

and procedures on a government-to-government basis to ensure that cultural resources, traditional cultural properties, sacred sites, and properties of cultural interest are mutually considered throughout all stages of NRCS conservation



Poarch Indian Tribe Chairman Eddie L. Tullis (L) with Bob Jones, NRCS STC, signs MOA for conservation assistance from NRCS.

planning activities. This agreement is significant in that it is the first time an agreement has been entered into by Alabama NRCS and a tribe.

According to Eddie L. Tullis, Chairman of the tribe, "The signing of this agreement is significant. I hope that other agencies will see the need to formalize agreements with the tribe."

NRCS is anxious to provide assistance to the tribe. "NRCS wants to make sure that the tribe is aware of all the programs that are offered by our agency. The agency is serious about working together to help preserve our cultural resources. The signing of this agreement is a formal process that indicates we are moving toward further cooperation," says Bob Jones, Alabama NRCS State Conservationist.

Demonstration of Composting for Alternative Markets

Bill Hagemore of the Battleground Community has undertaken a composting demonstration project that he hopes will benefit poultry producers who need help with disposal of by-products, especially in the winter months. The compost turner is used to replace the oxygen in compost for more complete composting. The Tennessee Valley RC&D Council, Cullman SWCD, and an ADEM 319 grant sponsored the project. The project is designed to take poultry litter waste and convert it into a marketable, value-added product that contains the three basic plant nutrients—nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium—and serve as mulch for gardens, flowerbeds, and other ornamental uses.

By receiving poultry litter from other farms, Bill will store the litter in a



dry-stack type facility and treat it to make a product that can be handled, bagged, and sold to various markets as a soil replacement or amendment. If successful, the demonstration will show that litter can be shipped out of the county and will reduce local buildup of excess nutrients.

ALABAMA'S HYDROLOGIC UNIT BOUNDARY PROJECT

NRCS in Alabama has completed initial digitizing of the 5th and 6th level hydrologic unit boundaries for Alabama. (A digital data layer file contains this data in arcinfo.) Also, an attribute table has been developed providing the hydrologic unit codes (HUC's) associated with the digitized polygons.

Alabama NRCS is checking the completed work and making necessary corrections to meet the required standards. To insure seamless, consistent data, Alabama is sharing boundary data with adjacent states. When quality review checks are completed, an interagency review process will take place and a request for certification will be submitted.

FROM THE FIELD

Dale County Landowners Pursue Quality Deer Management

Several private landowners noticed deer in Dale County with deformed antlers, which is a sign of malnutrition. County residents asked NRCS and Dale County SWCD staff to provide information on how to improve the health of the wildlife in the area. The SWCD organized a public meeting and 110 interested landowners attended.

Alton Gibson, with Purina Mills, Inc., talked about nutrition and supplemental feeding for deer. NRCS Wildlife Biologist Jeff Thurmond discussed management requirements for healthier herds and trophy bucks. The meeting was a success and another one is planned for the fall.



NRCS Wildlife Biologist Jeff Thurmond discussed management requirements for healthier herds and trophy bucks with local landowner.

Cherokee County SWCD Provides Assistance

Cherokee County SWCD teamed with local sponsors to construct a new chert parking lot at Leesburg Recreation Park. Representative Richard Lindsey, Coosa Valley RC&D, Cherokee County Youth Girls Softball League, and the town of Leesburg provided financial and technical assistance.



L-R: Stacy Bandini, Cherokee County Youth Girls Softball League; John Garmon, Cherokee County SWCD; Beth Farmer, Cherokee County Youth Girls Softball League; Ed Mackey, Mayor of Leesburg; Rep. Richard Lindsey; and Scott Curry, Cherokee County Youth Girls Softball League.

Cullman County Holds Open House

NRCS/SWCD staff joined almost 200 dignitaries, U.S. Congressman Robert Aderholt, and others in an open house for the new USDA Service



(L-R) Grover Reeves, Cullman County SWCD; Eloise George, Rural Development Manager; Steve Pelham, State Director Rural Development; Cullman Mayor Donald Green; Aubrey Lowery, building owner; U. S. Congressman Robert Aderholt of U. S. District 4; Kelvin Veal, CED of FSA; Tony Prince, CDM of RD; Judy Hill, District Conservationist of NRCS; Robert Harbison, Chairman, Cullman County SWCD; and State Congressman Jeremy Oden of District 11.

Center in Cullman County. Congressman Aderholt cut the ribbon and presented a U.S. flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol for use at the facility.

The USDA Service Center houses Rural Development

(RD), Farm Service Agency (FSA), NRCS, Cullman County SWCD, and Congressman Aderholt's office.

Cleburne County Completes Portion of Chief Ladiga Trail

Cleburne County received a check from the Coosa Valley RC&D to help complete the work on the Chief Ladiga Trail, Alabama's first extended rails-to-trails project that stretches from Anniston to Atlanta, Georgia. Rails-to-trails projects convert abandoned railways in to walking trails. When complete, the

Chief Ladiga Trail will be about 90 miles long. The trail is excellent for bicycling and walking. It is handicap accessible, promotes tourism, and increases the quality of life for residents. Visit the Chief Ladiga trail website for more information: <http://www.jsu.edu/depart/epic/RailTrail.htm>.

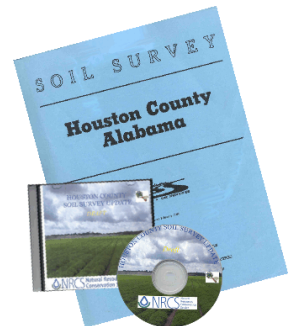
NRCS In The Classroom

Alabama NRCS Conservation Agronomist Ben Moore recently presented soil loss prediction and Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) training to 13 students of the Soil and Water Conservation Class from Alabama A&M University in Normal, Alabama. The students were very interested in the information and participated in each of the sessions.

MLRA NEWS

Soil Survey Update In ArcView

The Houston County Soil Survey Update is the first soil survey in Alabama to be updated with ArcView software. The original Houston County soil survey was published in 1968. In 2000, the Houston County Soil Survey was digitized by the county using digital orthoquadrangles (DOQ) as a base map. The digital soil survey furnished by the county served as a starting point for the digitized update. The digital format enables the user to customize the product.



Southern Regional Cooperative Soil Survey Conference

Alabama NRCS employees were among the soil scientists, university liaisons, forest industries, public health departments, and private contractors who attended the Southern Regional Cooperative Soil Survey Conference held at Tybee Island, Georgia, in June. The Southern Regional Cooperative Soil Survey Conference is held every other year in different parts of the region.

University of Florida Graduate Students Make a Stop in Alabama

As a part of a summer soils course, graduate students from the University of Florida made a stop in Alabama to observe the soil of the Piedmont/Coastal Plain. The students traveled from Florida to Wisconsin and stopped along the way to view the soil and geology of the regions they passed through. George

Martin, USDA/NRCS-MO-15 staff, and Bill Puckett, USDA/NRCS-Soil Quality Institute, gave them a tour of the Piedmont/Coastal Plain transitional area.

Professional Soil Classifiers Association of Alabama

The Professional Soil Classifiers Association of Alabama held its annual meeting in June at DeSoto State Park. Dr. Jim Lacefield, professor at the University of North Alabama and author of the book **Geology of Alabama**, was the keynote speaker. The group toured the Little River Canyon and observed the soil and the geology of the area.

RC&D NEWS

The Elderly Medication Program Going State-Wide

The Northwest Alabama RC&D Council, in partnership with the Department of Senior Services (DSS), is proud to announce that a program similar to the current TEMP Program will go state-wide in October 2002. "This program has experienced tremendous success in 14 months of operation, saving indigent senior citizens in our five county area approximately 2.5 million dollars," said Roger Hayes RC&D Vice-Chairman. The program has served over 2,300 seniors by providing them with free life-sustaining medications that they could not have afforded. Because of the cost of medication, the majority of program participants were either doing without medications or not taking them as prescribed. This program allows seniors to receive those much-needed medications such as blood pressure, heart, cancer, asthma medications that truly are needed for life support.

CAWACA RC&D Council

Collins Chapel, a small Chilton County community, was recently awarded a grant from the CAWACA RC&D Council to help pay for a lighted track to enhance the newly expanded Volunteer Fire Station/Community Center. The Chilton SWCD helped sponsor the grant proposal.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Forestry Awareness Week Now (FAWN) Celebrations

Several counties in the state participated in FAWN celebrations this spring. FAWN is a conservation educational program directed at young minds to raise the understanding of forestry and wise use of our forests. During the FAWN Program, students learn about soils, forest products, forest

management, forest history, tree identification, and wildlife.

Marengo County—hosted its fourth annual FAWN program at the Chickasaw State Park with 410 students and 19 teachers. Volunteers from Alabama Wildlife and Fisheries, Alabama Forestry Commission, NRCS, Georgia Pacific, Linden Limber Company, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and other resource professionals were instructors during the program.

Escambia and Conecuh County—NRCS/SWCD, along with the Alabama Forestry Commission, recently hosted its annual FAWN Field Day event. The weeklong event helped teach 800 Escambia County first graders and Conecuh County third graders the importance of taking care of our natural resources. Home schooled children and some special education classes also attended.

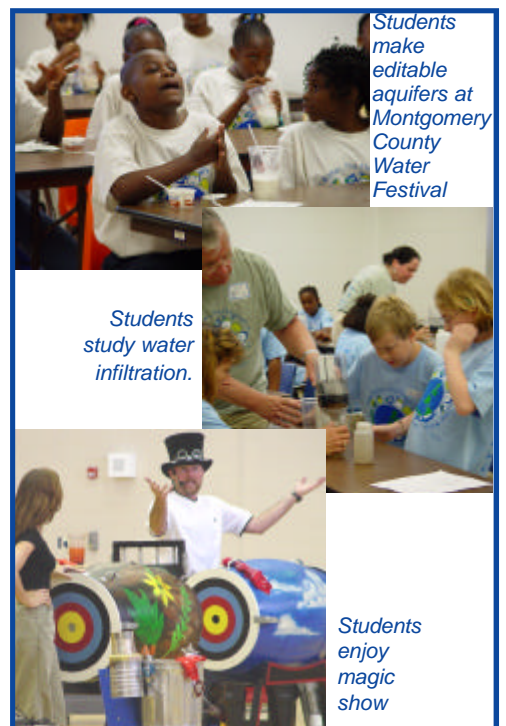


Clarke County—NRCS staff participated with 17 other local agencies and forest industries in the FAWN Program. The program provided an exciting learning activity in a unique setting for the sixth graders of Clarke County.

Other Conservation Education Events

Montgomery County –NRCS/SWCD staff participated in several events in the spring. On April 19th they attended the

Environmental Fair at Macon East Montgomery Academy and presented several programs using The Earth and the Apple illustration, the Enviroscape, Ruby Raindrop, and Plant a Seed



Students make editable aquifers at Montgomery County Water Festival

Students study water infiltration.

Students enjoy magic show

teaching tools. Participants ranged from preschool to high school students.

On April 25th and 26th they sponsored a Backyard Conservation booth at Earth Zoo Safari Day at the Montgomery Zoo. At a Conservation Station, they presented "The Earth and the Apple" to over 8,000 students, teachers, and parents. The staff distributed coloring books and Backyard Conservation bookmarks.

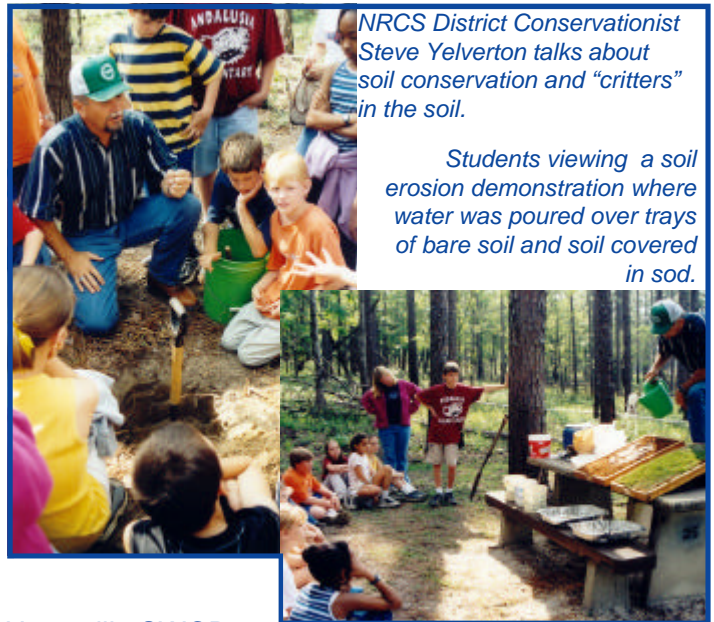
The Montgomery County 2nd Annual Water Festival was held in May on the campus of Auburn University at Montgomery. About 1,800 fourth grade students and teachers, and about 200 volunteers participated in the event.

The students and teachers at the festival rotated between three activities: The Edible Aquifer, Water Cycle Bracelet, and Water Infiltration. They also enjoyed a magic show presented by Steve Trash. Five NRCS employees participated as classroom presenters: Shannon Weaver, Steve Musser, Pam Mason, Darin Moseley, and April Jones. Also participating were: SWCD employees—Gail Russell and Alice Ward, and Earth Team Volunteers—Eddie McCrory and Ricky Halbrooks.

Pike County—In May, NRCS/SWCD employees and volunteers participated in Pike County's first ground water festival. Over 450-4th graders learned about ground water use and hazards. The Pike County SWCD distributed about 500 t-shirts imprinted with their name and logo. The Center for Environmental Research and Service sponsored the event and Troy State University hosted it.

Covington County—Over 300-5th graders from Covington County area schools participated in a two-day outdoor classroom field day in April sponsored by the Covington County Forestry Planning Committee at the Conecuh National Forest Blue Lake facility. Members of the Forestry Planning Committee and NRCS staffed stations that included plant life, Native American artifacts, prescribed burning, wildlife, soil conservation, and sustainable forestry.

NRCS District Conservationist Steve Yelverton presented a program about soil conservation. He discussed the importance of soil and how to protect it. The students viewed a soil erosion demonstration where water was poured over trays of bare soil and soil covered in sod. Students saw from the cloudiness of the runoff water that much more erosion occurred on the bare soil than on the soil covered in sod. The students also learned about types of soil and soil health, as well as insect and microbial life that exist in the soil ecosystem. They looked at soil layers and dug through a tub filled with rich soil that was full of arthropods and other "critters."

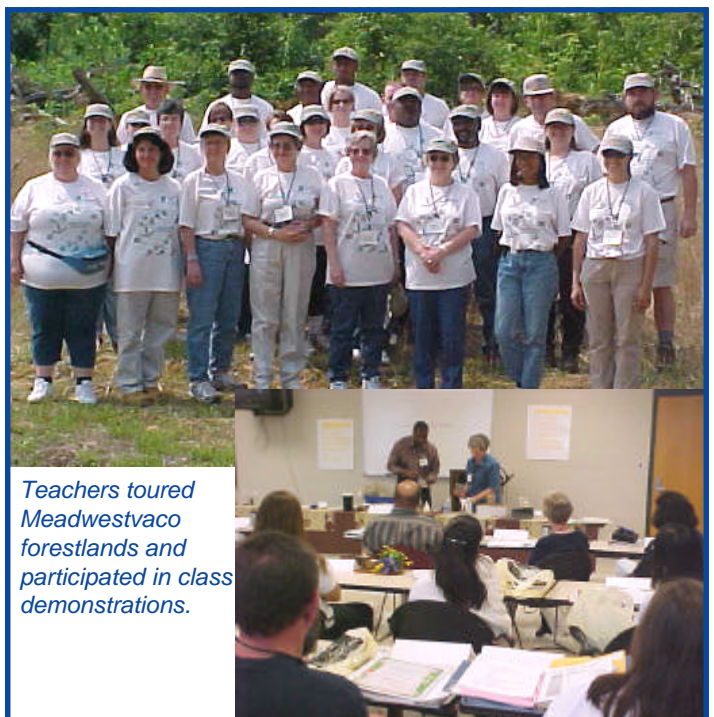


NRCS District Conservationist Steve Yelverton talks about soil conservation and "critters" in the soil.

Students viewing a soil erosion demonstration where water was poured over trays of bare soil and soil covered in sod.

Huntsville SWCD Holds Annual Teacher Workshop

Madison County SWCD staff held its 4th environmental education teacher workshop in Huntsville, July 8-12. Twenty-seven teachers from local K-12th grade schools attended the five-day workshop and received a 40-hour certificate and .6 CEU's from A&M University for incorporation of Project Wet activities in the workshop. Teachers learned about waste management, pollution prevention, natural resources, ecology, outdoor classrooms and the impact of urban sprawl on farmlands. The workshop included tours, speakers, demonstrations and hands-on activities. Teachers received lesson plans and free materials for use in their classroom.



Teachers toured Meadwestvaco forestlands and participated in class demonstrations.

Dr. Doug Phillips of the PBS's Discovering Alabama series gave a 4-hour presentation on the diversity of Alabama. Each teacher received a Discovering Alabama video.

The workshop was free for the teachers. All supplies and resources were donated and all speakers contributed their time and expertise.

AWARDS

CAWACA RC&D Council

The CAWACA RC&D Council recently received the USDA-NRCS Earth Team-Southeastern Regional Award for their creative and aggressive use of volunteers to achieve the Council's goals and to empower communities to help themselves. In 2001, the Council used over 300 volunteers to provide over 3,000 hours of service equaling over \$45,000 worth of labor and a priceless amount of morale and community support. The number of volunteers and the hours contributed has tripled in less than two years.

Madison County, Alabama, DAC receives National Award

Kathy Walker, Madison County District Administrative Coordinator, received the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution "Excellence in Community Service" award. The DAR Hunts Spring Chapter in Huntsville nominated Kathy for her work with the "Walk in the Park" project. The project was a culmination of her vision of turning a nondescript piece of urban land into an attractive walking area filled with trees, shrubs, benches, and a gazebo, and getting Huntsville's private citizens, groups, businesses, and government entities organized to help. The outcome is a beautiful area where the entire community can congregate that is full of flowers and seasonal flowering and shade trees. With her enthusiasm, the dream became a reality in the fall of 2001.



Kathy Walker (L) and flowerbed in project area.



Paul Kennedy Receives "Friend of Planning" Award

Paul Kennedy, CAWACO RC&D Coordinator from Birmingham, was honored with the "Friends of Planning" award by the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association at their annual meeting in May for his service and assistance in support of regional and community planning. In previous years, this award was given to mayors, members of city councils, and members of planning commissions. It is obvious that Paul has gone beyond the call of duty to support planning and urban renewal in north Alabama.

Grover Reeves is Recognized

Grover Reeves, Cullman County SWCD Supervisor, received the prestigious "Conservation Tillage Pioneer Award" in June at the 25th Annual Southern Conservation Tillage Conference for Sustainable Agriculture in Auburn.

Grover was indeed a pioneer in the promotion, researching, and demonstrating conservation tillage in the early years of the adoption of the practice. Grover was the local representative for the Chevron Chemical Company, which was itself a pioneer in conservation tillage by manufacturing, testing, promoting and demonstrating the first chemicals used in no-till.

Grover was active with universities in South Carolina and Kentucky in working with extension personnel on the benefits of conservation tillage and no tillage regimes. Results of this work were disseminated through on-farm demonstrations and farmer/producer meetings in counties across the states of Kentucky, South Carolina and Alabama.

Grover was the host to an incalculable number of field days across the Southeastern States promoting conservation tillage by showing how it could be done. Grover would cook fish in outdoor portable black pots and farmers in the area would come for lunch and learn about conservation tillage. Many times Grover would have "Supper" meetings, and cook fish and show slides of how conservation tillage worked.

He was persistent at getting prominent farmers together for demonstrations and getting them



Grover Reeves, Cullman County SWCD Supervisor, received the "Conservation Tillage Pioneer Award." (L-R) Ben Moore NRCS agronomist (nominator), Irma Reeves, Grover, and NRCS State Conservationist Bob Jones.

to allow demonstrations on their own farms. Therefore Grover was a key leader in getting conservation tillage accepted and adopted by farmers upon whom others depended for guidance and leadership in the adoption of new farming technology.

Grover Reeves was also named an Unsung Hero in his local newspaper because he helps people in need. He does not claim to be a chef, but he has cooked meals for hundreds of local people.

Examples are:

- Annual Thanksgiving meal at a church in Cullman
- Lions' Club ham and fish day each year
- Volunteer fire departments throughout the county
- Other churches in his local area
- Special meal honoring veterans of World War II and the Korean Conflict.
- Cooking for carpenters and builders participating in church mission trips in the northwest portion of our country.

Not only does he cook, but he serves as chairman of the Committee for Church Cooperation that helps the less fortunate with special needs or who don't qualify for other forms of assistance; he's chairman of the local Farm-City program; he is a deacon in his church; and he volunteers hundreds of hours with the Cullman County SWCD.

It is because of his generous, giving spirit, that Grover Reeves was saluted as an Unsung Hero in Cullman County.

TRAINING

Silvopasture Training

Three silvopasture training sessions were presented in Alabama this spring and summer for NRCS field personnel, Cooperative Extension System Agents, and Consultant Foresters. The sessions were held in Auburn in April, in Tuscaloosa in May, and in Hanceville in June.

Certified Animal Waste Vendor Training Sessions Scheduled

This year's Certified Animal Waste Vendor training sessions are scheduled. Employees who have not had the training may wish to attend one of the workshops. Check the **Calendar of Events** on the Alabama homepage for scheduled dates.

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SCS/NRCS Retiree News From Jesse Bush

SCS/NRCS Retiree's meeting for Fall 2002 will be in Gulf Shores, September 19-20, 2002, at Beachside Resort Hotel (old Quality Inn) located at 931 West Beach Boulevard. Special rates have been obtained for this meeting. Make your plans to be with us for fun and fellowship. For more information contact Jesse Bush, retiree chairman, Phone: 334-749-0274, e-mail: cgbush@mindspring.com.

PERSONNEL

Accessions

Jamie Carpenter, Soil Conservationist, Moulton, AL
Grant Gordy, Soil Conservation Technician, Marion, AL
Chris Rice, Soil Conservation Technician, Scottsboro, AL
Angela Warden, Soil Scientist, Luverne, AL

Summer Interns

Homer Adams, Opelika, AL, Tuskegee University
Kendrick Flowers, Huntsville, AL, Alabama A&M
Trumaine Jackson, Jackson, AL, Alabama A&M
Deana Lasater, Athens, AL, Auburn University
Terrance Mobley, Eutaw, AL, Alabama A&M
Ben Morgan, Phenix City, AL, Auburn University
Desiree Rucker, Tuskegee, AL, Tuskegee University, AL

Promotions

Detra Boutwell, Soil Conservationist, Geneva, AL, to District Conservationist, Brewton, AL
Travis Carnley, Soil Conservation Technician, New Brockton, AL
Thomas Hughes, District Conservationist, Dothan, AL to Assistant State Conservationist (Field Operations), Decatur, AL

Reassignments

Alice Love, Resource Conservationist, Indianapolis, IN to Soil Conservationist, Auburn, AL
Charles Ramsey, District Conservationist, Monroeville, AL to Gulf Coast RC& D Coordinator, Bay Minette, AL

Resignations

Robert Reynolds, Soil Conservation Technician, Eutaw, AL



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

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